DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 260 469 CS 505 010

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TITLE The Relationship between Rhetorical Sensitivity, Communication Apprehension and the Ability to Decode Nonverbal Cues.
PUB DATE Oct 84
NOTE 57p.; Paper presented at the Annual Communication, Language and Gender Conference (7th, Oxford, OH, October 14-16, 1984).
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Reports - Research/Technical (143)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Communication Apprehension; *Communication Research; *Interpersonal Communication; Nonverbal Communication; *Speech Communication
IDENTIFIERS *Rhetorical Sensitivity

ABSTRACT

Results of research on rhetorical sensitivity suggest that the sensitive person has developed the ability to reach a social context and the others within it and to respond appropriately, while results of research on communication apprehension suggest that high apprehension leads to avoidance of communication situations. If so, then the degree to which people are apprehensive ought to affect the type of rhetorical person they develop into. A study was conducted that hypothesized a relationship between rhetorical sensitivity, communication apprehension, gender, and the ability to decode nonverbal cues. The subjects, 128 students from Indiana State University, were randomly selected from eight sections of Communication 101 during the spring semester of 1984. Subjects were asked to complete two self-report instruments, the Rhetorical Sensitivity Scale (RHETSEN) and the revised Personal Report of Communication Apprehension (PRCA). All participants were also asked to view and complete the Profile of Nonverbal Sensitivity (PONS) test. Results showed that to be rhetorically sensitive is to be apprehensive of communication encounters. To be rhetorically insensitive is to be nonapprehensive. Future research should include psychomotor behaviors to determine the relationship between each aspect of learning about communication. (Tables of findings are included). (DF)

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THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN RHETORICAL SENSITIVITY, COMMUNICATION APPREHENSION AND THE ABILITY TO DECODE NONVERBAL CUES

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Abstract: Research on Rhetorical Sensitivity suggests the sensitive person has developed the ability to reach a social context and the others within it and respond appropriately. Research on Communication Apprehension suggests that high apprehension leads to avoidance of communication situations. If so, then the degree to which a person is apprehensive ought to affect the type of rhetorical person they develop. This study hypothesized a relationship between Rhetorical Sensitivity, Communication Apprehension, gender, and the ability to decode nonverbal cues.

Submitted to the Seventh Annual Communication, Language and Gender, Conference, Miami University, Oxford, Ohio, October 14-16, 1984.

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Communication competence has emerged as an important concern for communication professionals during the 1970's and 80's. The identification by the Federal government of the five basic skills -- reading, writing, speaking, listening, mathematics -- gave impetus to current efforts to describe and assess competence. However, Wiemann and Backlund report an absence of a uniform definition of competence.[1]

One cause for the failure to agree upon a definition, according to McCroskey, is "the confusion between communication competence and communication performance."[2] He recommends a distinction be drawn between the two, a distinction found in the work of Larson, Backlund, Redmond and Barbour. They describe communication competence as "the ability of an individual to demonstrate knowledge of the appropriate communicative behavior in a given situation," and communication skill as "the ability of an individual to perform appropriate communicative behavior in a given situation."[3]

Both definitions set forth two conditions one must meet in order to be communicative competent, (1) knowledge of the appropriate communicative behavior, and (2) the ability to perform appropriate communicative behaviors within a variety of contexts.

Assessment of communication knowledge and skill become an issue in the appraisal of competence. If the areas of knowledge and skill, which account for the perceptions of competency can be identified, then pedagogical strategies can be developed to, "...increase the student's understanding of the variety of ways in which communication is used."[4] These strategies may then be used to improve performance. Competence often has been defined in terms of dimensions of knowledge and/or skill.

Bochner and Kelly identified five dimensions, (1) empathic communication, (2) descriptiveness, (3) owning feelings and thoughts, (4) self disclosure, and (5) behavior flexibility.[5] Empathic communication requires an individual to be sensitive, "...to the needs and values of other people."[6] Descriptiveness is the process by which one sends and receives feedback. Owning feelings and thoughts implies the taking of responsibility for one's own self and a commitment to others. Self disclosure allows one to know what the other is thinking, feeling, or wishing. Behavior flexibility, "...refers to an individuals capacity to relate in new ways where necessary."[7] Empathy and owning feelings describe knowledge or understanding required of a communicator while descriptiveness, self disclosure and flexibility describe behaviors to be performed.

Kelly and Chase suggested three dimensions, (1) activity, (2) empathy, and (3) task completion.[8] Activity and task completion are described as behavior. Empathy is described as a knowledge.

Wiemann proposed five dimensions, (1) interaction management, (2) affiliation/support, (3) empathy, (4) social relaxation, and (5) behavior flexibility. Interaction management refers to how smoothly the individual manages the communication interaction without simply reacting, or attempting to dominate it. Empathy requires, "...the individual must take control of the other accurately; he must be able to correctly predict the impact of the various lines of action will have on the others definition of the situation."[9] Social relaxation is the ease experienced within a communication interaction. Affiliation/support is the amount of support given to the other. Behavioral flexibility is the degree in which one is able to adapt their behavior to

changes within the encounter as the situation requires. All dimensions but empathy describe behaviors.

Littlejohn and Jabusch identify four dimensions, (1) process of understanding, (2) interpersonal sensitivity, (3) communication skills, and (4) ethical responsibility.[10] Process understanding, "...is the degree to which a person understands what is going on in the transaction. And cation transactions.[11] Interpersonal sensitivity is the ability to perceive one's own internal feelings as well as the feelings of the others around them and of the communication context. Communication skills are, "...an ability to use a particular physical or conceptual operations in a communication situation to achieve an objective."[12] Ethical responsiblity is the balance between self and others and involves a, "...predisposition to act in such a way as to achieve a positive outcome for others as well as for oneself."[13] Their conceptualization describes process understanding, interpersonal sensitivity, and ethical responsibility as knowledge. Communication skill is described as behavior.

Lewis/BuerkulRothfuss also presented five dimensions, (1) symbolizing, (2) processing, (3) feeling, (4) management, and (5) adapting.[14] Each of the components are not separate, but rather interact with each other to help the individual to be perceived as a competent communicator. Symbolizing involves how one expresses what they are thinking or feeling by the utilization of nonverbal cues or words. by the selection of symbols understood by the other interactants, communication effectiveness can be increased. Processing is the mental activity one engages in to make sense out of their world. Processing follows symbolizing and the symbols one uses will effect the ability to

process. Adapting refers to the ability to modify behavior to fit the role relationships, the individuals, and the context. Feeling is the recognition and reception of the feelings expressed by others. Managing permits one to influence or exert control over the other interactants. Processing and feeling appear described as knowledge about the communication situation. The other three dimensions are described behaviorally.

Figure 1 graphically compares the five conceptualizations of communication competence.

Despite differing conceptualizations of competence, three dimensions are common: empathy, interaction management, and behavior flexibility.[15] The descriptions of Empathy place it as a "knowledge of" while Interaction Management and Behavioral Flexibility may be placed as "performance of" appropriate behaviors, a performance presumably based upon a "knowledge of" the behaviors appropriate to the social situation. To become a competent communicator, according to McCroskey and Larson et.al., requires knowing <u>what</u> to do and <u>how</u> to do it.[16] The confusion, argues McCroskey, arises from mixing the conceptualizations and measurements of cognitive knowledge with the conceptualizations and measurements of psychomotor behaviors. He recommends that communication competence be viewed through learning domains affective, cognitive and psychomotor.

In essence, the differences between the knowledge of appropriate behaviors and their performance, may be explained in the attitudes/feelings about communication the affective domain. Figure 1 expresses the relationship between the three domains of learning. Attitudes/feelings about communication directly impact upon the development of cognitive abilities and, in turn, are influenced by such learning. Psychomotor performance also is

directly influenced by attitudes/feelings. The affective domain influences learning about communication in at least two ways: enhancing or depressing the acquisition of knowledge of appropriate communication behaviors and performing or withholding the communication behaviors appropriate to a given social setting. Figure 2 expresses this relationship using dimensions found descriptive of communication competence.

McCroskey asserts that little research has been completed on the impact of the affective domain upon communication learning, with the exception of research on communication apprehension.[17] Research on CA has import for a conceptualization of competence.

The inverse of communication competence is "communication apprehension."[18] One lacking the knowledge and skills of competency may be experiencing some degree, or form of, communication apprehension. CA has been conceptualized two ways, (1) State CA, and (2) Trait CA.

State CA, "...is specific to a given oral communication situation, such as giving a particular speech to a group of strangers or interviewing with an important person for a new job."[19] Trait CA, on the other hand, is a fear of communicating which extends across a wide variety of communicative settings to where, in extreme cases, even a dyadic context can be painful.

Daly and Friedrich have cited literature listing four possible causal agents aiding in the development of apprehension: (1) reinforcement, (2) modeling, (3) skills acquisition, and (4) genetic positions.[20] The latter will not be dwelt with here.

Reinforcement is the individual seeking those situations bringing "favorable consequences." For some, participating in group activities is seen as rewarding while for others it is viewed as a form of punishment.[21]

Skills acquisition suggests that those who are apprehensive have either failed to develop, or have not acquired rapidly enough, the necessary skills for social interaction. Within skills acquisition, attention is given to the child's use of verbal cues. The authors state that the child's use of verbal cues is important in the development of the interaction skills, with the more popular children being the ones more socially skillful.

Modeling suggest apprehension is due to the child's imitation of others they observe in an interaction. Two areas where this can be seen are the school and the home. the degree to which partents interact with their children seems to have an effect on the child. "Mothers of anxious children tend to interact less with the child; are rigid, restrictive, and dominate; often criticize; and provide little variety for the child."[23] In the school, teachers may either help reduce or compound a child's apprehension through the way they approach interaction in the classroom.

CA has, therefore, been demonstrated to influence the acquisition of knowledge about communication and the performance of behaviors based upon such knowledge.

Another measurement of an attitude toward communication, specifically, encoding, has been developed by Hart, Carlson and Eadie.[24] Rhetorical sensitivity may be viewed as "an attitude toward encoding."[25] They identify five constituent parts of the rhetorically sensitive attitudes: acceptance of personal complexity, avoidance of communicative rigidity, interaction consciousness, appreciation of the communicability of ideas, and tolerance of

inventional searching. In describing the rhetorically sensitive person, they connect the concept to communication competence:

> Because rhetorical sensitivity has been conceptualized as a holistic attitude toward encoding, and because one's attitudes toward a given communicative encounter place constraints on one's interpersonal behavior, the development of a method for assessing rhetorical sensitivity would contribute in important ways to the study of communication competence. If it is true that the importance of one's communicative behaviors is equalled in significance only by the attitudes with which those behaviors are enacted, it seems to follow that no purely behavioral designation of competence would alone suffice as a theoretical or pedagogical tool in the area.26

Hart and Burks view the individual as a "Multifaceted" self and this perspective is:

> ..essential to a sophisticated view of communicative behavior since rhetorical invention is a process of selecting those aspects of ourselves which, when made rhetorically manifest, will best meet the social conditions we face.27

Hart and Burks further stipulate that within each person lies a Rhetorical Self, a Noble Self, and Rhetorical Reflector. People differ only in how each of the three attitudes within them differ.

The first is the Rhetorical Self. Those considered to be rhetorically sensitive are thought to possess a "repertoire of selves," any of which they may call on to choose from for any given rhetorical experience. This individual believes in shared choice, is not subjected to rigid behavioral patterns, and is aware of the behavioral choices in any situation and attempts to choose the appropriate behavior. This individual is seen as communicatively competent.[28]

The Noble Self is characterized by how the individual deals with others. The Noble Self's, "...principles of conduct and styles of behaving are never

(well hardly ever) sacrificed for the sake of another person or the pressures of a situation.[29] Needs of others are of little importance, if taken into account at all. Further, the Noble Self seeks to control situations, is unwilling to compromise, and treats those who disagree as being indifferent. Persons displaying the characteristics of the Noble Self are viewed as incompetent.[30]

Rhetorical Reflectors are seen as the inverse of the Noble Self. Their concern lies with others, not within themselves. "They have no self to call their own.[31] For each person and each situation they present a new self." The, "...choices from Rhetorical Reflectors arise from the perceived needs and wishes of the other person...The self reflector...makes no positive contributions of (their) own ideas, goals, or style of the transaction..."[32] They too are viewed as incompetent.

Two attitudinal measures, then, have been found influential in the knowledge of and performance of appropriate behaviors -- communication apprehension and rhetorical sensitivity. Figure 4 places those two attitudes in relation to the cognitive and psychomotor dimensions of competence.

Inherent in the descriptions of behavior flexibility -- having a diverse behavioral repertoire and understanding of which behaviors to perform when -- is the ability to decode the verbal and nonverbal messages within the social situation. Research suggests that communication apprehension inhibits the development of decoding abilities associated with peer interaction, reciprocity, sensitivity to social cues and interaction management.[33] The rhetorically sensitive person has the ability to observe and adjust to the behaviors of the others with whom one contacts.[34] While rhetorical

sensitivity describes an attitude toward encoding per se, the explanation of the concept inherently includes decoding. Burgoon and Saine, in evaluating research on the ability to perform or read nonverbal codes, conclude there is a "consistency between overall encoding and decoding ability."[35]

Inherent in the descriptions of empathy a heightened sensitivity to the needs and values of others, an ability to recognize how the other feels is the ability to decode the nonverbal messages within the social situation.[36] One measure of a person's emphatic qualities is the capacity to "identify the emotions communicated to him by another person."[37] McCroskey argues that communication apprehension may need to turn its attention to assess nonverbal behaviors, a shift from the focus upon the verbal.[38] He asserts that, if high apprehensives withdraw from and/or avoid communication situations, their nonverbal behaviors ought be be different from low apprehensives.[39] Hart, Carlson and Eadie found a positive correlation ($r = .13$) between the rhetorical self and interpersonal competence, and instrument indirectly assessing the ability to interpret the behavior of others.[40]

What emerges, then, is a relationship between the two measures of attitude toward communication and the ability to detect and respond to nonverbal cues. If this ability is inherent in empathy, behavioral flexibility and interaction management, then attitude directly affects the cognitive and psychomotor performances required to be considered a "competent communicator."

Accordingly, we made the following predictions:

1. A negative relationship exists between communication apprehension (CA) and the rhetorically sensitive person (RS).

2. A negative relationship exists between the ability to decode nonverbal cues (PONS) and the Noble Self (NS) and the Rhetorical Reflector (RR).

3. A positive relationship exists between rhetorical sensitivity (RS) and the ability to decode nonverbal cues (PONS).

4. Discernible relationship exists between communication apprehension (CA) and the Noble Self (NS) and the Rhetorical Reflector (RR).

The first and the fourth are predictions consistent with research findings reported by Hart et. al. One study found a correlation between speech anxiety and rhetorical senstivity of r = .19.[41] An earlier study reported partial correlations of less that r = .10 between speech anxiety and the rhetorically sensitive.[42]

Research on these concepts suggests that gender may affect either communication attitudes or the ability to decode nonverbal cues. While gender does not seem an important difference between RS and NS, the Rhetorical Reflector is more likely to be female.[43] No difference between mean and women appear in terms of general communication apprehension.[44] But, women consistently exhibit a superior ability to decode nonverbal messages when compared to men.[45] Therefore, we predict:

5. Women will demonstrate a superior ability to decode nonverbal codes when compared to men.

6. A positive relationship exists between being female, a Rhetorically Reflector and the ability to decode nonverbal codes.

If these predictions are accurate, then we have taken a step toward reducing the confusion associated with the conceptualization and measurement of competence by directly tying attitudes toward communication (Affective learning) to the decoding of nonverbal behavior (Cognitive learning), a precursor to social performance (Psychomotor learning).

PROCEDURE

Subjects

Initially in the study there were 128 participants from eight sections of Communication 101 at Indiana State University randomly selected during the spring semester of 1984. After collecting the data, 108 participants, 58 females and 50 males, completed all measurements.

After being informed of the nature of the study and having collected the appropriate permission forms, they were asked to complete two self-report instruments.[46] The first was the RHETSEN and the second was the revised PRCA. Following completion of the self-reports, all participants were asked to view and complete the PONS test.[47]

The Instruments

The Rhetsen is in the form of Likert type scales containing 40 statements asking the participant's preference as to how they would respond to different possible communicative settings. By responding to such statements as, "When you're right, you should press your point until you win the argument."; "A friend who has bad breath should be told about it."; "You should share your joys with your closest friends."; and, "A person should tell it like it is.", the three dimensions can be measured with the score.

Five possible responses are available, (A) almost alway true, (B) frequently true, (C) sometimes true, (D) infrequently true, and (E) almost never true. Responses are measured differently with different scoring for the Rhetorical Reflector, the Noble Self, and the Rhetorical Self.

For the Rhetorical Reflector the scale is, E = 2, D = 1, and all other equal 0. The scale for the Noble Self is A = 2, B + 1, and all other equal 0. The scale for the Rhetorical Self, C = 2, B or D = 1, and A or E equals 0.

The second instrument is the PRCA. The PRCA is similar to the RHETSEN in using Likert type scales and consists of 24 statements. There are five responses, (SA) strongly agree, (A) agree, (U) undecided, (D) disagree, and (SD) strongly disagree. Those scoring one standard deviation above the mean are considered almost always as "highly anxious," while those scoring one deviation below the sample mean are "low anxious."

The final instrument administered was the PONS. The purpose of the PONS is to "tap" the decoding abilities and gauge how accurate one is in decoding, "...different scenes in different nonverbal channels."[48] The PONS consists of a 45 minute black and white film consisting of 220 randomly selected segments which are either audio, visual or both.

Each of the 220 segments may be grouped into one or more of eleven possible channels. Five of the channels, (1) face alone, no voice; (2) body from neck to knees, no voice; (3) face and body down to the thighs, no voice; (4) face plus electronically filtered voice; (5) body plus randomly spliced voice; and (6) body plus electronically filtered voice.

Participants are asked to view the film. After each segment there is a slight pause. During each pause participants are asked to select, from two statments what they feel was the correct scene being portrayed. In scoring, the total correct answers were tabulated with the highest possible score being 220. A score of 170 indicated the 50 percentile. One standard deviation above the 50 percentile indicated accurate decoder while one standard deviation below is considered an inaccurate decoder of nonverbal cues.

RESULTS

The means for RS, NS and RR are consistent with those reported by Hart,

Carlson and Eadie. They report RS female = 31.6, RS male = 32.1, NS female = 15.2, NS male = 14.9, RR female = 7.3, RR male = 6.6 for a sample of over 3000 subjects.[49] Our sample, reported in Table 1, has the males with a slightly lower RS score than females, lower then either gender from the original study. Our females scored lower on NS than the males in our study and both genders in the original. The men in our sample score lower RR than females for either gender in the earlier study. The standard deviations for each gender differ little.

The mean scores on the PONS are different, with the women scoring higher. the variability also is less for the females than the males.

The women in our sample report a higher apprehension score with less variability than the males.

Table 2 reports the correlation matrix between the major variables of the study - RS, NS, RR, PONS and CA for the entire sample. Strong negative relationships exist between RS and NS, and between RS and RR. But, no significant relationship appears between NS and RR.

Scores on the PONS are positively related to RS but negatively related to NS. No relationship appears between the RR and the PONS.

The surprise found in the matrix is the positive correlation between RS and CA ($r = .3524$). We expected a negative relationship between these two variables. A negative relationship does appear between NS and CA ($r = -.2760$) and between RR and CA ($r = -.2225$). Using raw scores, not categorized data, the higher the RS, the higher the apprehension; the higher the NS the lower the apprehension.

The picture that emerges from the matrix is that RS is different from either NS and RR. The RS is more likely to decode nonverbal cues with greater

accuracy and is more likely to report greater communication apprehension then the NS or RR.

A stepwise multiple regression was performed to explore the correlations. With RS as the dependent variable, CA emerges of the first predictor (Table 3) accounting for approximately 12.4% of the variance. PONS becomes the second predictor but accounts for only 1.9% of additional variance. With NS as the dependent variable, CA also emerges as the best predictor. However, CA accounts for only 7.6% of the variance (Table 4). Gender becomes the second best predictor adding 5.1% to the accounted for variance. With RR as the dependent variable, gender emerges as the best predictor accounting for 5.6% of the variance (Table 5). CA emerges as the second best predictor raising variance accounted for by the regression formula to 11.64%. In general, then, little variability is accounted for by the variables even though the original correlations were statistically significant.

In Table 6 the correlations between the CA subscores (dyadic, group, meeting and public speaking) and RS, NS, RR illustrate differences between them. RS shows a positive and significant correlation with all subscores. NS shows a negative and significant correlation with all subscores. The RR shows negative relations to all subscores but only the Dyadic and Group scores are significant. In sum, the apprehension reported by RS appears consistent across communication settings while the lower apprehension of the NS is consistent also.

Because of the overall correlation between RS, NS, RR and the total score on the PONS, a maxtrix of subscores is reported (Table 7). Again, a distinct difference appears between the RS and the NS. A positive and significant

relationship exists between RS and the channels of Face (no voice), Body (no voice), Face and Body (no voice), and Voice (randomly spliced withno picture). A negative and significant relationship exists between NS and the same "pure" channels. Small relationships exist, following the same positive/negative pattern for RS and NS, on the six "combined" channels. The RR shows little relationship to the ability to decode nonverbal cues.

Because gender may influence a person's attitude twoard communication, correlations were computed for males and females. Table 8 illustrates a difference between RS, NS and RR respondents on the major variables. A negative relationship is revealed between RS and NS and RR. No relationship emerges between NS and RR. The positive correlation between PONS, CA and NS is present. However, although the relationships are negative, they are not significant between NS and PONS or CA. A negative relationship does emerge between RR and PONS, relationship not apparent when both genders were included.

When the CA is reported by subscores, no significant correlation appears between RS and NS males (Table 9). The only subscore of significance relationship to one of the rhetorical types is Meeting to RR.

In Table 10 the correlations between RS, NS, RR and the subscores of the PONS appear. Male RS has a positive relationship to the channels of Face, Body, Face and Body, and Body (randomly spliced) but no significant relationship for any of the other channels. The NS males consistently have a negative relationship with the PONS channels but only the Face and Body correlations are significant. The RR males have a negative relationship with Face, Body, Body (randomly spliced), Face and Body (randomly spliced) and the PONS total. Apparently, the more likely a man is to be an RR the more likely

he is unable to accurately decode nonverbal cues. The inverse is the case for the male RS.

For females, like the males, the distinctions between RS, NS, and RR remain. The positive relationship between RS and CA continues as does the negative relationship between NS, RR and CA (TAble 11). However, no relationship appears between any of the rhetorical types and PONS (RS = .0831; NS = -.1680; RR = .1024). In this case, however, the correlation between PONS and RR is positive, a change from the correlation of the combined genders and the males. Apparently the RR females is a better nonverbal decoder than female NS and RR male.

The female RS, like her male counterparts, has a positive relationship with the CA total and all subscores (Table 12). Unlike the male NS, however, the female NS has a significant negative relationship to three of the four subscores - Dyad, Meeting, Public. The RR female shows a negative relationship to Dyad, Group subscores and CA total.

No relationship emerges between any of the rhetorical types for the women of our sample and scores on the PONS, neither total nor channel scores. Of the 33 possible relationships, only NS to Body may be considered significant. Although the women consistently score higher than the men on the PONS, that ability appears distributed among the rhetorical types.

The PONS data was divided according to one standard deviation above (HI) or below (LO) the sample mean. Table 14 reports the comparisons between RS, NS, RR and the 29 people divided into HI or LO categories. Although the mean scores differ between the HI and LO scores for each of the rhetorical types, no significant difference emerges.

However, the RS and combined NS/RR groups do differ in their ability to decode nonverbal cues. Table 15 compares the mean score for RS (168.956) with the combination of scores for the NS and RR (162.313), a difference significant at the .05 level. RS subjects are better decoders. But, two peculiarities of our sample are revealed in this table. First, 91 subjects are classified as RS, 84% of the total sample. Second, the PONS total mean for the RS is below the norm reported in the PONS Test Manual.

When the RS and combined NS/RR subjects are compared on CA, no significant difference occurs. The mean of 73.23 for RS is higher than the combined NS/RR mean of 68 (Table 16) and the variability is less (6.464 and 11.448).

The PONS and CA were divided into HI, MOD and LO. The MOD group contained those subjects who scored within one standard deviation of the mean (Table 17) on each instrument. No significance is found between the categorized data (Table 17). the largest group is MOD/MOD comprising 59% of the total sample. Only 1 person had HI CA and LO PONS while no one was LO CA and HI PONS.

When males and females are compared on CA (Table 18), no differences appear between the genders. The finding is consistent with most CA research. Apprehension toward communication apparently is sexually unbiased.

However, males and females are different in the ability to read nonverbal cues (Table 19). For PONS total and all but 3 subscores the women score significantly higher than the men. Only for Content Filtered voice do the men score better then the women. Finally, the rhetorical types were compared by gender. For RS, no difference appears between the men and women, although the women score slightly higher (Table 20). However, the NS males are higher than

NS females (15.94, 12.70) while the RR females score higher than RR males (7.72, 5.82). Therefore, for this sample, gender did influence attitudes toward communication for those identified as Noble Selves or Rhetorical Reflectors.

DISCUSSION

The first prediction was not confirmed. Both men and women RS showed a positive relationship with CA. The women were positively correlated with CA total and each subscore -- Dyad, Group, Meeting, Public. Men RS were also positively but not significantly related to the subscores. When males and females were compared on CA total and the subscores, no significant differences emerged between the genders although the women reported slightly higher apprehension.

Perhaps our sample is too small and parochial to be representative of a general population or those college students participating in the earlier studies. Another explanation, however, may be proper. The Rhetorical Self is described as adaptive to others with the encounter, resistant to self-centeredness and "interaction conscious and willing to adjust sensitively to the highly situational demands placed upon them during their encounters with other people."[50] Adaptability requires an awareness of alternative communicative strategies any one of which may/may not be appropriate. The awareness of alternatives may carry with it an awareness of the consequences of selecting poorly and "making a fool of yourself" or "damaging the relationship." The Rhetorical Self, more aware of choices and consequences,

may find any communication encounter more "risky." Awareness of the risks to self and others in a communication encounter may increase the probability of reporting apprehension on the PRCA.

The fourth prediction was not confirmed. A discernible relationship exists between CA and NS, RR. Both men and women NS and RR showed a negative relationship with CA total, although only the female relationship was significant. For female NS a negative relationship emerged for Dyad, Meeting and Public subscores. The RR also showed a negative relationship with CA total, again significant only for the women. The female RR showed a significant negative relationship with Dyad and Group while the male RR showed a significant, negative relationship to Meeting. While the correlation exists between raw scores, when the CA data is compared for RS and a combine NS/RR, no significant difference is revealed.

The rationale given for the positive relationship of RS to CA may explain the negative relationship betwen NS and Ca. That is, the nonadaptability of the NS, the self-centeredness, prevents a conceiving of no few choices within the various communication settings. If choice is not required, risk is minimal and no apprehension results.

The negative relationships between CA and RR is more difficult to explain. In our sample, the females scored higher on Ca and scored higher as RR. The negative relationship may be a quirk of our sample, not representative of the general population nor other college students. On the other hand, Rhetoric Reflectors, having not self to offer a communication encounter, reflecting back into the interact what they see in the other, may not experience apprehension. Like the NS, the RR is armed with a communication strategy to be utilized in any encounter. The strongest negative

correlations for RR females were to CA in Dyad and Group settings; for the RR males, Group and Meeting.

The second prediction was not confirmed. For both male and female NS, the correlations are negative although most frequently small (less than r = .10). When the PONS scores were divided into HI/LO for each rhetorical type, HI PONS scored lower NS and RR than the LO PONS for the same two types. Although the differences were not statistically significant, score difference was in the predicted direction. On the RR, however, a moderately different picture emerges. The male RR shows a negative relationship to the PONS total, while the female RR shows a positive but insignificant relationship. Since women consistently scored higher on the PONS, and since no female correlation between PONS and rhetorical type was significant, the general ability to decode nonverbal cues may blur the differences between females. that is, the attitude toward dencoding, measured by rhetorical sensitivity, may not influence the female ability to decode nonverbal messages.

The third precition was not confirmed, at least for the females. While the aggregate data reveals a correlation between RS and PONS, the correlation occurs for the male RS (r = .25). For female RS, the relationship to PONS is negligible (r = .08). Again, the general ability of the female may blur distinctions between the rhetorical attitudes of women. On the other hand, for RS male, the positive relationship with the PONS appears. Apparently, decoding nonverbal cues may be an ability of rhetorically sensitive men. the statistically significant difference between RS and combined NS/RR scores, reported in Table 15, may be attributed to the PONS scores of the men. However, the scenes in the PONS are portrayed by a woman. Perhaps the general

ability of women and of RS men, may mean they decode nonverbal cues from women, rather than manifest an ability tc read cues from both genders.

The fifth prediction was confirmed, the women scored significantly higher on the PONS than did the men. Perhaps the reason why no significance emerged when the PONS scores were divided into HI and LO results from the general tendency of the women to be better decoders, raising the average score for the LO group.

The sixth prediction was not confirmed, although the data moves in the anticipated direction. However, no pattern emerges when viewing female RR relationships to PONS total and channel scores. Our prediction was generated by the initial finding that the Rhetorical Reflector was most likely to be female. Coupled with the expected superior ability of women to decode nonverbal cues, the prediction seem justified.

An interesting picture begins to emerge from this data. First, regardless of gender, to be rhetorically sensitive is to be apprehensive of communication encounters. Second, to be rhetorically insensitive, a Noble Self, is to be nonapprehensive. The relationship is most clear for women but exists for the men of the sample. Third, to be a rhetorically sensitive male is to be a better decoder of nonverbal cues than men generally. However, women scored better on the PONS than did the men, a superiority which crossed rhetorical types blurring the distinction between them. Fourth, the Rhetorical Reflector does not appear as the separate and distince rhetorical type found in earlier works. The RR and NS people score similarly on apprehension (neither apprehensive) and as decoders of nonverbal cues (not as good if male and no different from RS if female).

CONCLUSION

Our overall interest in this study was the reduction in the confusion between conceptualizations of communication competence. To assist in sharpening the understanding of the competent communicator, we noted that Affective learning (attitudes toward communication) ought to affect Cognitive learning of appropriate communication strategies, strategies which may be manifested in Psychomotor learning. The PONS was selected as an example of Cognitive learning because of the inherent relationship between conceptualizations of communication knowledge and skill directly dependent upon the ability to decode the behavior of others. What we discovered supports the assertion that attitudes toward communication affects knowledge of communication. Although we were surprised by the relationship between the two measured attitudes, we were not surprised to find they were related to the decoding ability of nonverbal cues, particularly the ability of rhetorically sensitive males.

One step has been taken to clarify the understanding of communicator competence. What next step ought to be met is the addition of measure of Psychomotor behaviors to determine the relationship between each aspect of learning about communication.

FOOTNOTES

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TABLE 1

Value of Variables by Gender

		MEAN	S.D.
RS	M	30.600	8.293
	F	31.724	8.280
	Total	31.203	8.266
NS	M	15.940	6.498
	F	12.707	6.201
	Total	14.204	6.515
RR	M	5.820	3.718
	F	7.724	4.060
	Total	6.843	4.003
PONS	M	162.860	14.203
	F	172.259	8.701
	Total	167.907	12.444
CA	M	71.740	8.352
	F	73.052	6.799
	Total	72.444	7.550

N = 108 (M=50, F=58)

TABLE 2

Correlation Matrix Between Major Variables

	RS	NS	RR	$PONS_T$	CA_T
RS	-----				
NS	-.8209c	-----			
RR	-.4993c	-.0475	-----		
$PONS_T$	.1901a	-.2084a	-.0069	-----	
CA_T	.3524c	-.2760b	-.2225b	.1492	-----

N = 108

a = p<.05 b = p<.01 c = p<.001

TABLE 3

Step Wise Multiple Regression for Total Group w/RS as Dependent Variable

	F to Enter	R	R^2	Overall F	Significance
CA Total	15.0307	.3524	.1242	15.0307	.001
PONS Total	2.3705	.3789	.1435	8.7977	.001
Gender	.0275	.3792	.1438	5.8200	.001

TABLE 4

Step Wise Multiple Regression for Total Group with NS as Dependent Variable

	F to Enter	R	R^2	Overall F	Significance
CA Total	8.7436	.2761	.0762	8.7436	.004
Gender	6.1125	.3564	.1270	7.6389	.001
PONS Total	1.0201	.3681	.1355	5.4336	.002

TABLE 5

Step Wise Multiple Regression for Total Group w/RR as Dependent Variable

	F to Enter	R	R^2	Overall F	Significance
Gender	6.3823	.2382	.0568	6.3823	.013
CA Total	7.0848	.3412	.1164	6.9167	.002
PONS Total	.6598	.3493	.1220	4.8161	.004

TABLE 6

Correlation Matrix Between CA Subscores and RS, NS, RR

	RS	NS	RR	DYAD	GRP	MEET	PUBLIC	CA T
RS	-----							
NS	-.8209c	-----						
RR	-.4993c	-.0475	-----					
DYAD	.2984c	-.2304b	-.1854a	-----				
GRP	.2725b	-.1649a	-.2690b	.4750c	-----			
MEET	.2395b	-.2104a	-.1228	.6448c	.4160c	-----		
PUBLIC	.3039c	-.2622b	-.1371	.5280c	.4703c	.5008c	----	
CA T	.3524c	-.2760b	-.2225b	.8241c	.7375c	.7995c	.8100c	-----
	N = 108							

a = p<.05 b = p<.01 c = p<.001

TABLE 7

Correlation Matrix Between PONS Subscore and RS, NS, RR

	RS	NS	RR	FA	BO	FIG	PORS	CF	FARS	FACF	BORS	BOCF	FIGRS	FIGCF	PONS
RS	----														
NS	-.8209c	----													
RR	-.4993c	.0475	----												
FA	.1808a	-.2013a	-.0075	----											
BO	.2254b	-.2574b	.0036	.2879c	----										
FIG	.2061b	-.2318b	.0276	.4091c	.4361c	----									
PORS	.1671a	-.2064a	-.0462	.0862	.2658a	.2225b	----								
CF	-.0888	.1357	.0118	.0878	.0560	.1215	.0308	----							
FARS	.0700	-.0276	-.0215	.4307c	.2873c	.3683c	.2127a	.0653	----						
FACF	.0312	-.0898	.0803	.2712b	.3182c	.2911c	.3391c	-.1163	.1834a	----					
BORS	.1514	-.1047	-.1512	.4540c	.3535c	.3829c	.0658	.0635	.3570c	.2813b	----				
BOCF	.0825	-.0515	-.0435	.2249b	.2874c	.2762b	.0962	.1190	.3948c	.2013a	.2788b	----			
FIGRS	.1004	-.1493	.0287	.4656c	.3476c	.4330c	.1578	-.0027	.4897c	.3783c	.4643c	.3313c	----		
FIGCF	.0743	-.1330	.0817	.3807c	.3642c	.4166c	.3021c	.0525	.5784c	.3516c	.3752c	.3946c	.5531c	----	
PONS	.1901a	-.2084	-.0069	.6301c	.6263c	.6801c	.4397c	.2234c	.6783c	.5341c	.6301c	.5556c	.7102c	.7430c	----

N = 108

a = p<.05 b = p<.01 c = p<.001

TABLE 8

Correlation Matrix Between Major Variables - Males

	RS	NS	RR	$PONS_T$	CA_T
RS	-----				
NS	-.8598c	-----			
RR	-.5306c	.0612	-----		
$PONS_T$	.2542a	-.1051	-.2795a	-----	
CA_T	.2442a	-.1541	-.2283	.1292	-----

N = 50

a = p<.05 b = p<.01 c = p<.001

TABLE 9

Correlation Matrix Between CA Subscores and RS, NS, RR - Males

	RS	NS	RR	DYAD	GRP	MEET	PUBLIC	CA_T
RS	———							
NS	-.8598c	———						
RR	-.5306c	.0612	———					
DYAD	.2292	-.2102	-.0917	———				
GRP	.1867	-.1106	-.2215	.4494c	———			
MEET	.1580	-.0423	-.2522a	.6648c	.4110b	———		
PUBLIC	.2255	-.1432	-.1829	.6977c	.5527c	.6155c	———	
CA_T	.2442a	-.1541	-.2283	.8471c	.7375c	.8088c	.8882c	———
	N = 50							

a = p<.05 b = p<.01 c = p<.001

TABLE 10

Correlation Matrix Between PONS Subscores and RS, NS, RR - Males

	RS	NS	RR	FA	BO	FIG	PORS	CF	FARS	FACF	BORS	BOCF	FIGRS	FIGCF	PONS
RS	----														
NS	-.8598c	----													
RR	-.5306c	.0612	----												
FA	.2400a	-.0918	-.2594a	----											
BO	.3579b	-.1886	-.3565b	.2732a	----										
FIG	.2982a	-.2396a	-.1210	.4768c	.4826c	----									
PORS	.1206	-.1352	-.0855	.1015	.2549a	.2524a	----								
CF	-.1796	.2049	.0417	.1194	.0721	.2800a	.1763	----							
FARS	.1835	-.0224	-.2002	.5035c	.3967b	.4984c	.1144	.1448	----						
FACF	.0325	.0340	-.1283	.3599b	.3680b	.3759b	.2328	-.1143	.2225	----					
BORS	.2706a	-.1455	-.3130a	.4969c	.5134c	.5015c	.1503	.0822	.4596c	.5438c	----				
BOCF	.1194	-.0377	-.1313	.2482a	.3381b	.2984a	-.0381	-.0070	.4264c	.2663c	.4175c	----			
FIGRS	.0807	.0405	-.2434a	.4725c	.2471a	.5766c	.0102	-.0056	.6048c	.3820b	.5362c	.4699c	----		
FIGCF	.1657	-.1139	-.0986	.3435b	.3719b	.4897c	.2647a	.0009	.6836c	.3725b	.4406c	.4080b	.5808c	----	
PONS	.2542a	-.1051	-.2795a	.6484c	.6288c	.7673c	.3562b	.2467b	.7540c	.5818c	.7639c	.5729b	.7268c	.7383c	----

N = 50

a = p<.05 b = p<.01 c = p<.001

TABLE 11

Correlation Matrix Between Major Variables - Females

	RS	NS	RR	$PONS_T$	CA_T
RS	-----				
NS	-.8073c	-----			
RR	-.5341c	-.0277	-----		
$PONS_T$	.0831	-.1680	.1024	-----	
CA_T	.4627c	-.3866c	-.2791a	.1237	-----
	N = 58				

a = p<.05 b = p<.01 c = p<.001

TABLE 12

Correlation Matrix Between CA Subscores and RS, NS, RR - Females

	RS	NS	RR	DYAD	GRP	MEET	PUBLIC	CA_T
RS	-----							
NS	-.8073c	-----						
RR	-.5341c	-.0277	-----					
DYAD	.3646b	-.2706a	-.2688a	-----				
GRP	.3612b	-.2171	-.3532b	.5073c	-----			
MEET	.3050b	-.3394b	-.0651	.6334c	.4207c	-----		
PUBLIC	.3758b	-.3389b	-.1769	.3596b	.3668b	.3637b	-----	
CA_T	.4267c	-.3866b	-.2791a	.8124c	.7379c	.7901c	.7079c	-----
	N = 58							

a = p<.05 b = p<.01 c = p<.001

TABLE 13

Correlation Matrix Between PONS Subscores and RS, NS, RR - Females

	RS	NS	RR	FA	BO	FIG	PORS	CF	FARS	FACF	BORS	BOCF	FIGRS	FIGCF	PONS
RS	----														
NS	-.8073c	----													
RR	-.5341c	.0277	----												
FA	.0878	-.1895	.0920	----											
BO	.0823	-.2179a	.1569	.1719	----										
FIG	.0936	-.0839	.0008	.1567	.7873a	----									
PORS	.1889	-.2084	-.0884	-.0258	.2202a	.1221	----								
CF	.0005	.0625	-.0015	.0784	.0596	-.0167	-.0864	----							
FARS	-.0946	.1006	.0444	.1972	.0680	.0716	.2665a	-.0196	----						
FACF	-.0057	-.0900	.1571	-.0135	.1670	.0410	.3929c	-.1129	-.0017	----					
BORS	-.0359	.0899	-.1185	.2519	.0585	.0705	-.1215	.0582	.0500	-.2855a	----				
BOCF	.0321	-.0312	.0066	.1577	.2207a	.2291a	.2189a	.2850a	.3311b	.0835	-.0073	----			
FIGRS	.0944	-.2600	.1956	.3194b	.3701b	.0951	.2561a	.0185	.1966	.2556a	.2071	.0811	----		
FIGCF	-.0709	.0036	.1229	.2663a	.2420a	.1628	.2865a	.1457	.3279b	.1845	.1139	.3677b	.3966c	----	
PONS	.0831	-.1680	.1024	.4585c	.5803c	.4457c	.5324c	.2720a	.4707c	.3390b	.2297a	.5774c	.5924c	.6665c	----

TABLE 14

Difference Between Hi/Lo on PONS and RS, NS, RR

		n	$\bar{X}$	S.D.	S.E.	T	DF	Probability
RS								
	Lo	17	29.177	9.133	2.215	-1.00	26.48	n.s
	Hi	12	32.250	7.313	2.111			
NS								
	Lo	17	15.765	5.368	1.302	.91	20.53	n.s
	Hi	12	13.667	6.624	1.912			
RR								
	Lo	17	7.0588	4.603	1.116	.50	26.99	n.s
	Hi	12	6.333	3.257	.940			

TABLE 15

Comparison Between RS and NS/RR on PONS

	n	$\bar{x}$	SD	SE	T	Probability
RS	91	168.956	11.851	1.242	-1.99	.05
NS/RR	16	162.313	14.822	3.706		

TABLE 16

Comparison Between RS and NS/RR

	n	$\bar{x}$	SD	SE	T	Probability
RS	91	73.231	6.464	.678	-1.78	n.s.
NS/RR	16	68.000	11.448	2.862		

TABLE 17

Comparison Between PONS and CA Hi/Mod/Lo Categories

		Lo	Mod	Hi	
Communication Apprehension	Lo	2	8	0	10
	Mod	14	64	8	86
	Hi	1	7	4	12
		17	79	12	108

$Chi^2 = 7.690$ d.f = 4 Probability = n.s.

TABLE 18

Gender Comparison on CA

	MALES		FEMALES		
	MEAN	S.D.	MEAN	S.D.	Probability
CA Total	71.740	8.352	73.052	6.799	n.s.
DYAD	18.280	2.304	18.224	2.177	n.s.
GROUP	17.180	2.513	17.345	2.074	n.s.
MEET	18.040	2.364	18.466	2.226	n.s.
Public	18.240	2.966	19.017	2.460	n.s.

TABLE 19

Gender Comparison on PONS

	MALES		FEMALES		
	MEAN	S.D.	MEAN	S.D.	Probability
PONS Total	162.86	14.203	172.259	8.701	.0001
FA	15.320	2.055	16.483	1.490	.001
BO	14.780	1.909	15.862	1.978	.01
FIG	15.040	2.070	16.397	1.796	.001
PONSRS	12.200	1.938	12.845	2.126	n.s.
CF	12.180	1.924	12.086	1.740	n.s.
FARS	17.120	2.191	18.017	1.583	.05
FACF	15.320	1.846	16.241	1.537	.01
BORS	14.640	2.354	15.552	1.429	.05
BOCF	14.380	2.156	14.655	1.617	n.s.
FIGRS	15.900	2.072	16.879	1.415	.01
FIGCF	15.980	2.236	17.241	1.647	.001

TABLE 20

Gender Comparison on RS, NS, RR

	MALES		FEMALES		
	MEAN	S.D.	MEAN	S.D.	Probability
RS	30.600	8.293	31.724	8.290	n.s.
NS	15.940	6.498	12.707	6.201	.01
RR	5.820	-3.718	7.724	4.060	.05

FIGURE 1

Dimensions of Communication Competence

	DESCRIPTIVENESS	EMPATHIC COMMUNICATION	OWNING FEELINGS AND THOUGHTS	SELF DISCLOSURE	BEHAVIOR FLEXIBILITY
Bochner and Kelly	X	X	X	X	X
Littlejohn and Jabusch	Communication Skills	Interpersonal Sensitivity	Ethical Responsibility	Interpersonal Sensitivity	Process Understanding
Wiemann		Affliation/ Support Empathy & Interaction Management Skill			Behavioral Flexibilty & Interaction Management
Kelly and Chase	Task Completion	Empathy			Behavior Flexibility
Lewis/ Buerkul-Rothfuss	Symbolizing & Processing	Feeling			Management & Adapting

Figure 2

Relationship Between Learning Domains

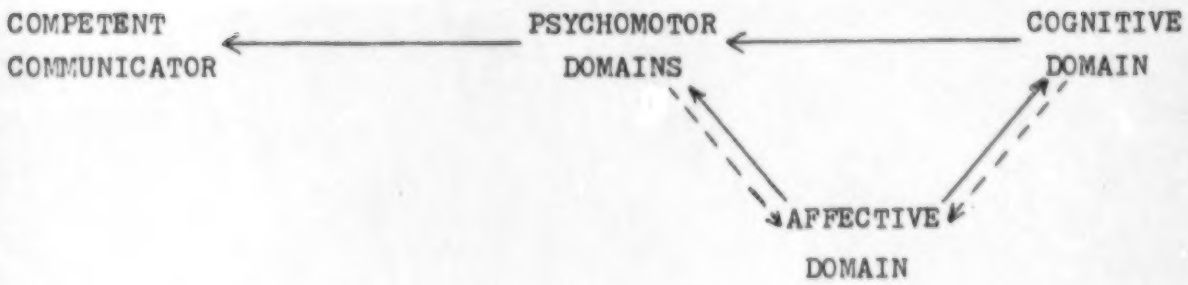

Figure 3

Relationship Between Learning Domains Using Dimensions of Competence

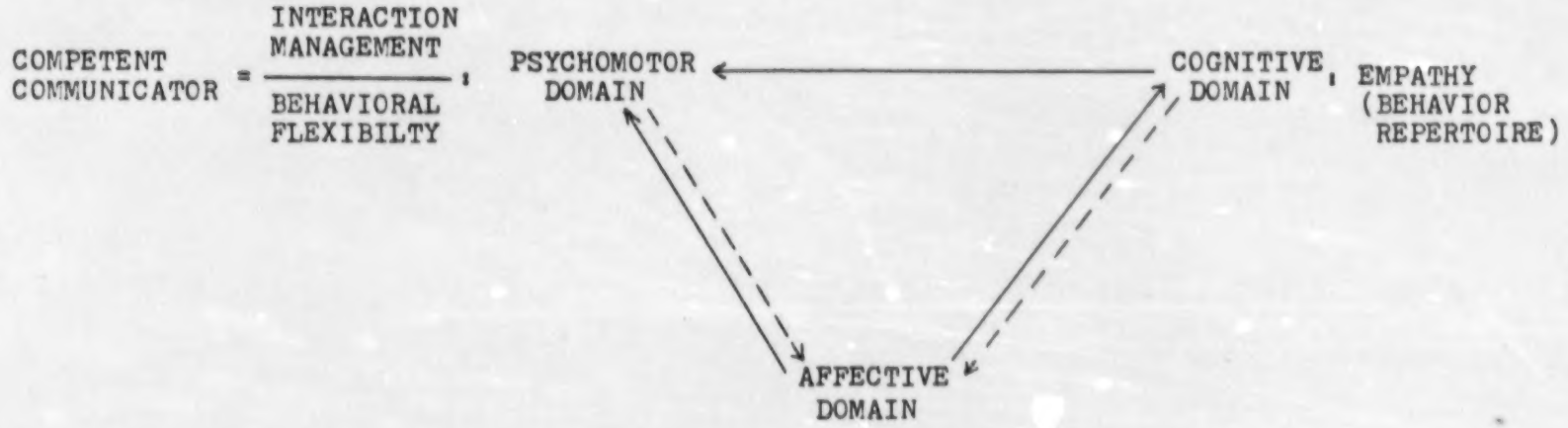

Figure 4

Relationship Between Communicative Attitudes

and Dimensions of Competence